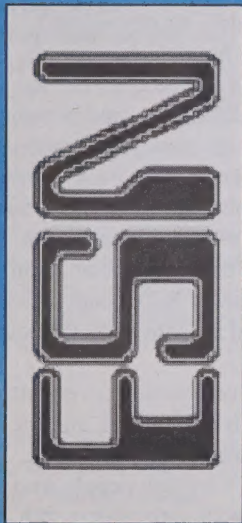


Edmonton Street News



Volume 6
Issue 1
2009

Vendors pay 50 cents per paper

City Agencies That Provide Meals

1. Bissell Centre

10527-96 Street - 423-2285
Monday to Friday - 10:30 a.m.
- sandwiches

2. Inner City Pastoral Ministry

at The Bissell Centre - 424-7652
Snacks after Sunday Service
- 12:00 to 1:00

3. Christ Church

12116-102 Avenue - 488-1118
Every 3rd Saturday - 5:00 p.m. meal

4. Herb Jamieson Centre

10014 -105A Avenue - 429-3470
For men not on assistance
Monday to Friday 7:00 to 7:45 a.m. breakfast
12:00 - 12:45 p.m. - lunch
5:00 to 5:45 p.m. - supper
Weekends 11:00 - 11:45 a.m. - breakfast
4:00 - 4:45 p.m. - supper

5. Hope Mission - 422-2018

Daily 7:00 to 7:45 - breakfast
Noon - lunch
5:00 to 5:45 - supper

6. House of Refuge Mission

10339-95 Street
Daily - 8 p.m. - meal

7. Marian Centre

10536-98 Street - 424-3544
Daily except Wednesdays
12:00 to 12:45 p.m. meal
Closed from the 27th of each month to the 1st

8. The Mustard Seed

10635-96 Street - 426-5600
Monday to Friday - 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. supper
Saturday - 5 p.m. - supper
Zero tolerance of alcohol

9. Operation Friendship

9526-106 Avenue - 429-2626
Monday to Friday - 9:00 a.m. - breakfast
Monday to Sunday - 12 noon - lunch
5:00 p.m. - supper

For seniors over 55 only

10. Red Road Healing Centre - 471-3220

Friday - 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. - soup and bannock

11. Salvation Army

9620-101 Avenue - 429-4222
Fridays - 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. - breakfast

14. St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

9606-110 Avenue - 426-1122
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7:00 a.m. Breakfast

13. St. Faith's Anglican Church -

parish hall
11725-93 Street - 477-5931

Thursday - 12:00 noon - soup

Saturday - 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. - breakfast
3rd Friday of the month - 7:00 p.m. - supper

14. Emmaus Church

5015- 144 Avenue - 275-1647
Monday - 4:45 to 6:00 p.m. - meal

15. Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre

9611-101A Avenue - 423-5302
Meals for women staying at the shelter.
If not, bag lunch is given

16. Edmonton Orthodox Reformed Church

1161- 95 A Street - 479-1860
Thursdays, 6:25 p.m. soup

17. Robertson Wesley United Church

10209-123 Street 482-1587
Second Saturday of each month
January to November, 5:00 p.m. meal

18. Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre

15210 - Stoney Plain Road - 481-4001
Mondays - 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. - meal

19. One Accord Bible Fellowship Church

10802 - 93 Street - 425-6310
Saturdays, 10:00 to 1:00 p.m. meals

20. All Saints Cathedral 10035-103 Street

Fridays - 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. - Breakfast

Have you witnessed an act of violence against a homeless person, or been homeless, and a victim of violence?

If so, please fill out the form below and return to Edmonton Street News, 9533-106A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 0S9

Name of person or persons involved (if known) _____

Date _____ Time _____ Where did the incident occur _____

What happened _____

Edmonton Street News

Issue 5 volume 1



Editor: Linda Dumont

Design: Linda Dumont

Proof Reader: Pedro Schultz

Writers: Allan Sheppard, Linda Dumont, Sharon Spencer, Jim Gurnett, Lauren Petersen, Pedro Schultz

Photos: Pedro Schultz, Natasha Laurence, Joshua Branston, Linda Dumont

Cover Photo: Pedro Schultz

The views expressed in this publication are those of the writers.

The deadline for the February issue is January 20.



Photo by Pedro Schultz

Code of ethics for Edmonton Street News

Edmonton Street News reserves the right to refuse publication of any article and or ad at the discretion of the board of Edmonton Street News Society.

We will not trivialize poverty in any way.

We practice sound journalism with respect to FOIP legislation and respect for the privacy of the persons portrayed in stories and photographs.

The views presented in this publication are those of the writers.

On vendors and vending - It's not easy to make it on the street



Observations while vending

By Linda Dumont

I'm standing just inside the doors of the Farmers' Market. It's cold. I'm tired, so tired it's pervasive, and that cold is biting my fingers. I can't tolerate cold at all - the least bit of frost and my fingers lose circulation - it's something called Reynaud's syndrome that apparently I was born with. My toes turn white, too. With that, I've never really been able to be competitive as a street newspaper vendor in the winter, so it's a good thing I have some other part time jobs.

My deficiencies as a vendor are all too obvious. A woman approaches carrying an interesting looking gift bag, "Do you know where the other woman vendor is," she asks. I answer politely, but I wonder, Why does she do this to me? Why tell me, "I'm buying a paper from the other woman." One woman even stood, holding a five dollar bill and, seeing me there instead of her, asked, "Where is she?"

I smiled, but as I watched her cross the street, I felt the bitter edge of discouragement.

What is it about me- my face? my colour? my smile? I don't know. I just try to stick it out long enough to earn what I need, waiting for the day I can just quit. No frills for me - no beer, no recreational drugs, no smokes, just those monthly utilities and rent and food - boring stuff: too many family members depending on me, too many obligations.

Maybe that's the problem. I'm working for necessities not for frills, so there isn't that happy anticipation in my manner. The five dollar bill doesn't buy me much joy- it's just added to the rest to pay a bill.

Perhaps that degree of desperation I bring to vending is a turn off - I don't have or welfare to fall back on, so I have no comfort zone. I am tired, sometimes sick with no sick days off - the hamster still on the wheel.

What makes a successful vendor? I don't know. If I did, I would be more successful. But my hat's off to those who are out there day after day - It ain't easy!!

On Distribution

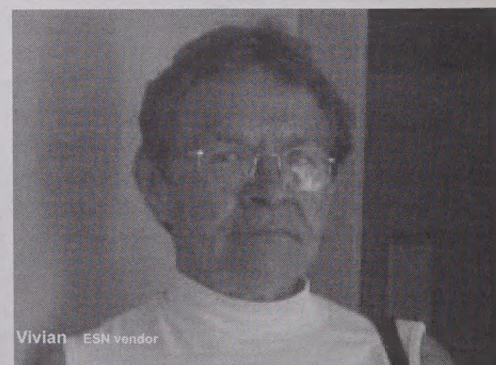
After having run through five different Edmonton Street News distributors, I'm down to doing it myself with vendors coming to the back door for papers. It's been working out pretty well, except there are times I'm not home due to various jobs. Then another family member often steps in and I come home to find a small pile of change on the desk. Those five to ten dollars a day add up over the course of a month!

I've tried a number of different ways and places to distribute the paper, but each turned out to be impractical and unprofitable, as well as more work. For a while we had office hours at the House of Refuge Mission but quit because vendors simply weren't coming during office hours to buy papers. I tried a couple of on the street distribution people, but found it difficult to find someone who can be trusted with money.. Often the money for the papers never got back to the office. Another person, who tried distribution, took a large number of papers home, then never bothered to go out to distribute them. We ended up with a short fall of papers that month, and he wound up with a stack of outdated papers.

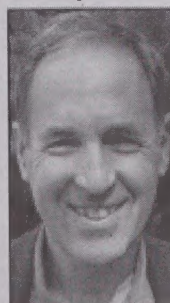
We can't hire anyone because everyone who works for ESN is a volunteer, and the money from paper sales helps pay for the next issue. There are very few people who will work consistently, month after month, with no salary. And distribution is probably the least rewarding aspect of a street newspaper..

Writers get to see their stories in print, and most writers love their craft, so it's no hardship to write. The vendors get cash return for papers they sell, so they have their reward. But the distributor has to deal with vendors, some very polite, honest and friendly, but others out to try to get papers for free. One vendor kept trying to trade an old camera for papers, and was really persistent even after I showed him I have a good camera and no need for another one he probably picked from a dumpster.

Reports of stolen papers, sometimes a whole bundle, have come back to me, and of lost papers. A few times a bag was even turned in by some honest person.



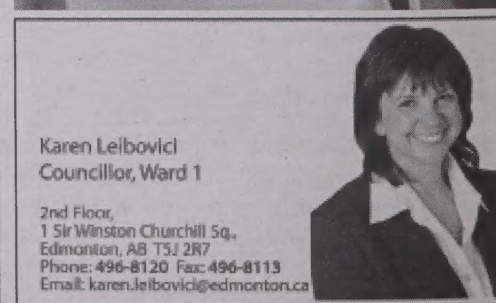
Vivian ESN vendor



Ben Henderson
Councillor, Ward 4

Please Contact Me on Civic Issues

ben.henderson@edmonton.ca
Phone 496-8146 Fax 496-8113



Karen Leibovici
Councillor, Ward 1

2nd Floor,
1 Sir Winston Churchill Sq.,
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7
Phone: 496-8120 Fax: 496-8113
Email: karen.leibovici@edmonton.ca

Book Review In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts

By Jim Gurnett

I spent the autumn learning from a powerful book by physician Gabor Mate. "In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts" (Knopf Canada) is a book best read in small bits, with time for reflection. It is uncomfortable and demanding, and challenges many of the dominant ideas that let us hold tidy lives together, seeing others as having problems and ourselves as alright.

The subtitle is "Close Encounters with Addiction" and the book moves between telling the chillingly honest and terrible stories of both his own life and the real people who have been part of his life working at Portland Hotel in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside; clearly written scientific information about the brain and human development; and revolutionary advocacy for better public policy in relation to drugs.

That's a lot to pack into one book but the most important thing he does is to invite readers to understand the only story any of us can ever deal with is our own, the only change we can ever make is with ourselves. Mate moves between his own experiences with work and consumer addiction, nice soft polite behaviours seen as misdeemeanours by most, and the stories of the wretched dying people on the streets of the urban core, whose narratives of addictions involve every type of drug and chemical in myriad combinations. What he manages to do, without preaching or pushing, is show the family relations of the two are much closer than those in the first group usually allow.

From the first pages, where Mate quotes 19th century writer Thomas de Quincey saying the roots of addiction are in "Misery, blank desolation, abiding darkness", to the final pages where he concludes "Healing occurs in a sacred place located within us all: 'When you know yourselves, then you will be known,'" Mate's book firmly presents struggles with addictions as a personal journey, yet at the same time a responsibility of all of us collectively.

The book offers startling information rejected by much of the medical establishment about the prenatal trauma origins of the propensity to addiction. He discounts the easy explanations of addiction as a matter of genetics and explains the interlocking reinforcements that maintain the strength of addiction: compulsive engagement with the substance/behaviour, impaired control over it, persistence that succeeds despite evidence of the harm it causes, and overwhelming craving that arises when the object of the addiction is not available.

As Mate tells the stories of the people he has come to know in downtown Vancouver it is evident how emotional isolation, powerlessness, and stress work to nurture addiction. Those most overpowered by addiction are often in lives where all these factors are at work. Wealthy or powerful people may manage to use the same drugs over an extended period with little apparent affect on their

lives.

The great difficulty of overcoming addictions is explained when we know the brain's neurobiology has been changed by the addiction so a person ends up with an organ of decision making that is impaired, yet the healing can only happen when the brain decides it wants to overcome its own dysfunction. Talk about Catch 22. Things are further complicated because an addiction reduces our consciousness of unpleasant stimuli in our lives and that seems helpful. And because it is so "helpful" we grow to overvalue the object or behaviour of addiction and undervalue other things, so more and more our focus becomes the craving for the object of addiction. Addiction, he concludes, is a poor effort to find a substitute for love.

But in addition to good information, well written, on the biology and psychology of addiction, much more fully developed than these few comments, Mate also uses some of the book to invite us to think about how as a whole society we can approach matters of addiction in a new way that is entirely different from the politically popular "war on drugs". Since this approach is an entire failure anyway, his suggestions are refreshing and offer a way of thinking about how we are all interconnected. War depends on dividing the world into good guys and bad guys and then making it alright to do whatever is "necessary" to get the bad guys. Mate suggests there is far more potential in an approach that does something about changing social structures that trap some people in low social status and powerlessness, proven factors that increase drug use. The current war on drugs directly increases the worst consequences of drug use, since the illegal status of drugs means prices are high and so more people engage in more criminal activity to get the resources to obtain their drugs.

But even if changes in the legal approach to drugs are not going to happen soon, Mate makes a strong case for harm reduction approaches so that at least the lives of afflicted people are more bearable. "Denying addicts humane assistance multiplies their miseries without bringing them one inch closer to recovery," he insists.

The journey through Mate's book is a dangerous one for those of us who have constructed safe tidy ways to understand people and the society where we live, but it is a journey that will also reawaken a sense that hope is a real and powerful quality of human life and not just a fuzzy word. He quotes Naguib Mahfouz saying "The problem's not that the truth is harsh but that liberation from ignorance is as painful as being born." And since none of us addicts of all sorts are keen on pain, the healing journey is not attractive, no matter how sensible it might seem, now good the end of the journey might be.

After finishing Mate's book some old memory awoke deep in me and I remembered a book I had picked up years ago, "Addiction and Grace" (by Gerald May), and I dug it out of the basement and wiped the dust off and am now beginning to explore it to keep learning more. May, like Mate, sees these matters as being in the realm of the spiritual. He explores the word "grace", a word very similar to "mercy", words that are related to the word for "womb", as vital to the path out of addiction. We all begin life in freedom, but as powerful attachments nail us down we lose that freedom. "To struggle to transcend any idol [addiction] is to touch the sacred hunger God has given us," May says.

There are probably none of us who do not have someone we love, if not ourselves, that is someplace on the continuum of addiction and Mate's book is a helpful substantial place to begin to understand just how complicated that is, and yet to put it all in a more realistic context, to be able to think about it sensibly rather than being overwhelmed.



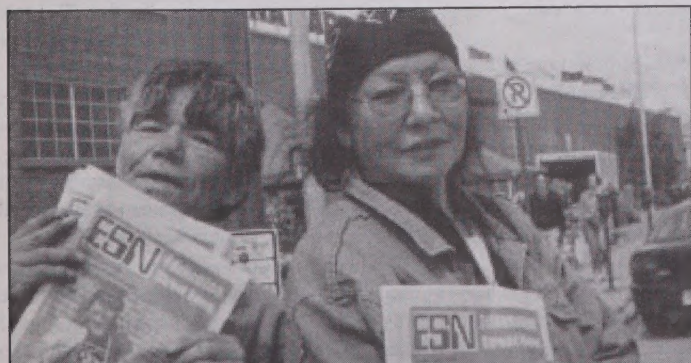
Fourth Annual **MEMORIAL** for **HOMELESS PERSONS**

January 24th, 2009
3 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Boyle Street Community Services
10116 - 105 Avenue

Everyone Welcome Round Dance to Follow

for information, please call Lorette @ 424-8335



Earn Money.
Sell Edmonton Street News
Call 780-428-0805 to sign up.

Mama's Chickens

Chapter 7 The ladder

By Sharon Spencer

In our strange little home what you, would have thought of as peculiar, was normal to us. Our childish eyes viewed the world through the morals and ethics thrust upon us by our trusty guardians. We believed that all homes must certainly be like ours, after all were not all parents the same - flawless and incapable of impropriety and imperfection? We certainly thought so.

Were not all boys treated with special privilege not shared by their sisters? Were not some children more deserving of love than others? Some certainly were viewed more perfect than others, so therefore deserved to be higher on the family ladder of importance. Ladder, you say? Now what's this crazy woman talking about? Well, most families have a family tree in their history but we had a ladder,

We children resided on the ladder, some high, some low. Some had a carefree existence and were barely aware of the ladder. Others were supported with thin, frail withered arms and crooked fingers that were incapable of holding on indefinitely. The ladder was also inter-

changeable with its magical rungs, but only at the bottom, where the passionless weaklings resided, acutely aware that they existed merely for the purpose of entertainment and family sport.

Family sport, you say? Great - finally we hear something positive about this family. They were athletic. No, wrong, wrong again. The only games these people played were head games, of a size so gargantuan that gold medals should have been awarded.

Because of the conspiracy of competitiveness that existed between my parents, we children mimed our environment. We sought to be like them and competed for supremacy and power. Power was everything, pain was everything, search and destroy, tear, shred, annihilate and all without mercy. Destruction at all costs was the Fryer family motto.

Round and round the children would dance enthusiastically, twirling, whirling with excitement stamped upon their innocent faces, round and round the circle we would go; louder, louder, search and destroy. The game, the family game, was the only instrument capable of binding us together in a co-operative order. Huddled

in the center in a fatal position would be one of the bottom dwellers. "Liver lips, pig nose, elephant ears," we would shout repeatedly at the unlucky one.

The unfortunate one in the center would preserve herself by pleading invisibly and silently, rolling up in a ball, arms clamped tightly over her head. Blindly, silently repeating, "I am not here, I am not here." The words would echo in our heads. But the crazed cacophony and dancing would increase in intensity as the other children danced and yelled wilder and wilder, taking some minor imperfection and magnifying it to grand proportions.

The tormentor's rage would be spent only when the bottom dweller was reduced to nothingness, or when mother was disturbed from her chores and realized something wasn't right. My, weren't the children noisy today! At this point they would be gently ordered to stop. The game would be over for the day, and all would go off to their separate ways. To this day the game still exists. It may have taken on subtler tones, however, it still is common practice at nearly every family banquet or celebration to feast on the bones of the bottom dwellers.

Man of Christ Abased

By Lauren Petersen Chapter 5— The Road North

We left for the Northwest Territories as soon as I completed school and my sister, Sharon, came home from her holiday. It wasn't an evangelistic trip, though. Gay had a scripture for that, too. He quoted the Bible saying a man wasn't to go to war for a year after he took a wife. He was to stay home and please his wife. We had been married only a few weeks, and already it would have pleased this wife more if he had gone to war.

The constant attention he insisted on was claustrophobic. He took the Biblical idea of a man and woman being one flesh to mean we were one person, with him in control and me an appendage to serve in whatever way he desired. This control extended to every area of life - what I wore, what I did, with whom I spoke, what I ate, and what I said. I had choose my words carefully, to dumb down my speech so I wouldn't use a word that he was unable to understand. It reminded him of my university education, an aspect of my life he deeply resented because of his limited education. I was under constant surveillance of even the smallest detail of my existence, and it was becoming hard to think.

The first day we drove as far as Lesser Slave Lake. From my point of view, the trip was long and tedious. Bent over towards Gay's side of the car for hours at a time, I didn't get a chance to see the scenery, and conversation was limited to his commands - "Keep rubbing. use your mouth, down further.....". Gay drove with his pants unzipped and his Charlie, covered in panties and pantyhose exposed for me to handle until my hands ached.

Once we camped, the only thing he wanted to do was to lie in bed, drink wine, feel himself up, and be felt up. I had never known anyone who could lie in bed all day and all night for days on end. Maybe it was the wine he was constantly sipping. We hardly went outside except to the campground washroom. I glimpsed the lake at a distance, but never walked down to the shore, and saw little of the campsite beyond our trailer in the week we were there. We could have stayed in the farmyard.

One night, I had a horrible dream. I saw Gay, looking thin and weak as he had the day after

the wedding, lying discarded in a big cardboard box under the bed, and a brutal stranger had taken his place. After that, Gay began to drink more and more heavily and became increasingly violent.

We left Slave Lake and drove on to Lady Evelyn Falls, a beautiful campsite just across the NWT border, but again I hardly left the trailer. When we did step outside, Gay insisted I be at his side all of the time. He kept mouthing the words, "I love you," and I would dutifully say "I love you, too," but the words were hollow. I didn't know what I felt anymore.

Gay continued to lie in bed all day, every day, fruiting himself up in his satin and chiffon, having me feel him up and service him, issuing orders for blow jobs and hand jobs, back rubs, and whatever else took his fancy. I found myself always on guard for he took pleasure in causing pain - sudden pinches or bites, or grabbing me painfully by the breast or bottom.

Sometimes I was so tired that I fell asleep after rubbing his back, or feeling him up by the hour, and he would yell angrily, shaking me, "Wake up. Keep rubbing. You can't go to sleep."

He was drinking almost constantly, and when we ran out, we drove the 180 mile round trip to Fort Providence to stock up on booze. On the way home he drove so erratically that, frightened, I took the keys from the ignition and threw them out. He was livid, and when he couldn't find them, took a screw driver and got the car running with that - apparently his skills extended to hot wiring cars.

Knives and fire fascinated him. One night he removed the gas tank from the camp stove, and using it as a blow torch, sat there in his feather trimmed black witch dress running the blade of the butcher knife through the flames while committing himself to Satan. As he concentrated on his task, his face was a rapt, twisted mask in the gathering darkness, and the feeling of evil in the trailer was almost palpable. Terrified, I managed to slip past him with the excuse that I was going to the outhouse. Once outside, I ran to another trailer, and knocked on the door. The people just stared at me through the door, looking frightened, and told me to go away. With nowhere else to go, I finally went back to the trailer.

Guy eventually fell asleep, but after that he

became increasingly violent. He had turned into the brutal stranger of my dream.

Chapter 6 - On to Yellowknife

We left Lady Evelyn Falls after a week, stopped briefly in Fort Providence for Gay to stock up on more liquor, then traveled on to Rae Edsel. The whole settlement is built on huge rocks. I taught there for a year, but returning with Gay, everything was different. I had become an outsider, and the people from the settlement regarded us with the suspicion reserved for the annual invasion of summer tourists. We only stayed a few days before going on to Yellowknife, the fifth stop on our northern trip.

By the time we reached Yellowknife, the money from my final paycheck was spent and we were broke. We even sold all of my jewelry.

We found work as a janitorial team at the Yellowknife hotel, starting when the bar closed at night and working through until morning. When we got ready for work the first day, Gay saw me dressed in my jeans and blouse, and went into a rage. "You can't wear that," he yelled, tearing off the blouse. "No one is going to see my wife's body." He gave me one of his shirts to wear, not tucked in but loosely outside my jeans. I had to roll up the sleeves, and the tails came down well over my hips and bottom since he was over six feet tall.

Gay had run out of cigarettes and was rolling tea leaves to smoke, so he was in a foul temper most of the time. One day he caught me reading my Bible, and snatched it out of my hands. I followed when he strode to the outside garbage can. He stood there and began tearing out the pages while I watched, not daring to say anything. His face was set and determined. The pages floated downward into the garbage can to be turned into a soggy mass by the drizzling rain.

The hard lump inside me grew larger, but I dared say nothing as my Bible was destroyed. It was as though I existed suspended in unreality, and within that space, I observed all that was done, but dared feel nothing.

Back inside, he said, "If you believe in God, he will heal your eyes." I wore contact lenses and was nearly blind without them. "Give me your contact lenses." Silently, I removed them and

All For the Love of God - The Adventures of a Street Pastor

Chapter 6

By Pedro Schultz

Dear friends, I hope each of you had a Christmas celebration of God's wonderful gift of love, and have experienced Christmas in your hearts. That is God's and my greatest desire for each of you. I want to start out this 6th chapter of my autobiography with some recent experiences. Yesterday morning I woke up at 3 a.m. Since I had neglected my usual Bible reading in German before bedtime because I was so tired, I did so now, as I had been doing quite often late. I had felt some concern when I had noticed my bank balance was quite low, but recited Philippians 4:4-6 to myself, the verses that God has used the most to help me feel peace when anxious. Here God has a command followed by a wonderful promise (quoted here from The Living Bible): "Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your heart quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus. I

handed them over. He took the two small pieces of plastic, and held them, one by one, into the flame of his lighter until they were reduced to ashes. Outside I could hear the waves of the lake sloshing against the shoreline.

My eyes weren't healed.

After that, I went to work half blind, cleaning those rows of stinking urinals, mopping the filthy floors, and cleaning out the ash-trays, but I couldn't tell if they were really clean or not when I was done.

We ran out of fuel for the camp stove, so I had a few very welcome minutes away from Gay each day while I was cooking in the camp shack and he waited for his meals, clad in his nightgown, feeling himself up. That was the only time in the day when I was alone. I dreaded returning to the trailer.

Gay got our first paycheck – just one check for the both of us made out to him, and bought himself whiskey and cigarettes. Back at the trailer, he started drinking heavily. I was sitting on the bed, and he was near the door hunched over the table. Suddenly he turned to me, and without warning, struck me on the right side of my face. I was shocked. One part of my mind registered the blow, analyzing "so this is what it feels like to be punched." No one had ever struck me in the face before in my life. There was a feeling of incredibility about it – this couldn't be happening to me.

"If you are a Christian, turn the other cheek," Gay said, then punched me on the other side of my face. He continued to do this, hitting first one eye, then the other, then he smashed his fist into my mouth. I could taste blood from my cut lip. When he returned to his bottle, I managed to slip past him and started running across the campground. He came pounding after me, and caught me from behind by the back of the shirt, ripping it and my bra right off so I was bare from the waist upward. I crossed my arms over my chest, and ran back to the trailer, but someone must have seen us, for shortly after, the police arrived.

They asked us to drive in to the police station. On the way, Gay warned me not to say anything to the police. He made me promise, knowing that to me a promise was sacred. He understood Christianity well enough to use it to his advantage. He said "If you tell anyone or try to leave

recommend each of you to memorize this powerful promise from God that He has always answered for me, including that morning. When I finished my fellowship time with God at 5:40 a.m. I felt very energized and wrote in my prayer journal "You know how happy I would be to be of help to someone tonight, but put this in Your hands." When I went to the entrance of my apartment I found one of my favorite street "grandchildren," cold and pacing up and down. She was so grateful to see me, and to get some food and a place to sleep.

I had first met this young lady with her sister on Boxing Day, 2007. There was no St. Albert bus running because of the holiday, so I wanted to do something special. (I had moved into a suite near St. Albert for a year). I bought the two girls, aged about 19, a meal, and while I was paying for it security started to escort them out. I followed them and they told me that one of them had been caught sleeping on one of the couches in the mall.

Security regularly wakes people up here and in the library, but there is often no alternative, even outside they are told to move on

Writer's Corner

If you would like to sponsor a writer, contact Edmonton Street News at 428-0805 or email edmontonstreetnews@shaw.ca. We can add more pages when we get more sponsors at \$70 per page per month.

me, I will find you and kill you." I felt the trap closing around me, and with it a cold hard knot of fear. I knew he meant what he said. We were far from anyone I knew. There was no where to go.

At the police station, we were ushered into a small room with a table, and seated side by side. An officer asked me what happened. With Gay right beside me, I couldn't say anything. I had no way of knowing if they would do anything to help me and if I said anything about Gay, and they didn't lock him up, who knows what he would do to retaliate.

The officer asked me if I was on drugs. I tried to tell him who I was, that I had never used drugs in my life, I was a teacher and a Christian but he didn't believe me. Perhaps it was my blind, myopic vision that made me look drugged, or maybe it was the way I was dressed, in a sloppy overly large man's shirt and jeans, with straggly hair and no make-up.

On the way back to the trailer, the car was hit from behind, damaging the right rear fender. Gay got out and spoke to the other driver. I don't know what was said, but we received no compensation and the police were not called.

It started raining.

Back at the campsite Gay finished the job the police had interrupted, striking me repeatedly on the face, first one side and then the other, with a smile on his face. He was actually enjoying what he was doing. Finally, tired of hitting me, he began smashing things, then broke every window in the trailer. Still not satisfied, he threw everything I owned out into the rain, as well as our dishes, pots and pans and other wedding gifts. Even in his seemingly blind rage, however, none of his own things were thrown out. Finally, spent, Gay pushed me down on the bed for sex, then, satisfied, pushed me roughly away, turned his back and was soon snoring.

I didn't dare go outside to retrieve our things as the rain soaked them through and turned the earth

when caught sleeping. It would be good to have some place downtown where a person can sleep for a while. I've needed that myself at times while waiting for my bus to go to work night shift. I offered to take the girls to West Edmonton Mall. They took me up on this offer enthusiastically.

Then I got an idea; "How would you girls like to be my grandchildren for the day." They liked that and soon asked: "Grandpa can we go on the rides there. It doesn't cost very much?" I decided it was still cheaper than having grandchildren permanently. I ended up investing over \$100 on them, after food and rides were paid. I believe this experience is one none of us will forget. I still believe it was a wise investment. Since then their dad has moved into the same building where I live. The girls have dropped by a few times when they were short of food. They still call me grandpa, and I kind of like that. Since I've been living in the inner city for over 16 years, I've "adopted" quite a large family, mostly from people who don't have a dad or grandfather, or have one who abuses them. I am looking for more healthy relationships now, which we all need.

into mud around them.

The next day Gay was solicitous, almost kind. He bought me a pair of sunglasses to hide my eyes. They were swollen nearly shut, ringed with black, and the whites of both eyes had turned a deep maroon colour. My jaw clicked, and I also had a cut where my tooth had gone through my lip.

With the trailer destroyed, we headed back to Edmonton. Gay managed to sell it to a friend of our boss, so we had enough money to pay for the trip.

The first night, we stayed at a motel. Gay was still being his most considerate self. We wore the matching nightgowns Gay had purchased - each with three layers of chiffon, mine in yellow, aqua and turquoise, his in gold, peach and orange. Gay always had to be swaddled in so many layers that when I put my arms around him at night, it felt like I was hugging an old woman.

The second night, we slept in the car at Peace River. It wasn't very comfortable because the whole back seat was filled with our stuff, and Gay's good nature was starting to wear thin.

Back in Edmonton, we drove up to the Hagledge house to see his adopted mom, Martha. Gay told her I had been injured in a car accident, and with the damage to the car, she believed him. I had never deliberately deceived anyone before in my life. That was just the first of the many lies that grew and grew into a dark secret blackness inside me that could not be shared with anyone, a blackness that just kept getting heavier. I was bound to silence by my promises and the vows I had taken.

There was a letter waiting for me from New Tribes Mission. They invited me to start training in the fall, a year later than I had originally applied to start. I just looked at the words, feeling numb, and said nothing. "Too late" filled my mind. I knew I would never attend their boot camp training, never be a missionary in a foreign country. It was too late, far, far too late for me. Silently I crumpled up the letter and threw it in the waste basket.

There's plenty of room under the bus

Being Stephen Harper means never having to say you're sorry

by Allan Sheppard

Perhaps you've heard the classical illustration of the Yiddish word, chutzpah: A young man murders his parents, then begs the court for mercy because he is an orphan?that's chutzpah.

There's a junior-high school variant: A schoolyard bully makes off with some classmates' lunch money, then accuses his victims of ganging up on him when they confront him together, trying to get their money back.

Then there's a Canadian political variant: Prime Minister Stephen Harper takes away the federal opposition parties' public funding and then accuses them of ganging up on him when they form a coalition to topple his minority government.

Harper's response to the coalition threat was typical bully behaviour: he blamed the victim, then run away, asking the Governor General to prorogue parliament, so he could avoid facing a confidence vote he would lose. In the process our prime minister-on-the-run threw anything and everything that got in his way under the bus. (The term "under the bus" became an overused cliché of the 2008 primary elections in the U.S. I try to avoid clichés, but this one seems too appropriate to ignore: it speaks to Mr. Harper's fondness for things politically American, even as it captures the reckless desperation of his attempts to preserve his tenuous position through every kind of public sacrifice, except his own.)

It's worth recalling how he?and we?got to the position where we now find ourselves.

Harper's campaign leading up to the January 2006 election was an opportunistic mix of bashing the federal Liberals, led by Paul Martin, over the Liberals' sins of corruption, mostly in Quebec, under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, with a few seemingly innocuous promises thrown in. It was a no-brainer strategy and it led to a minority victory by Harper's Conservatives over Martin's Liberals.

Things looked good in the long run for the Conservatives, under Harper, and bad for the Liberals, under the leader who replaced Paul Martin, Stéphane Dion. Dion turned out to be a bit of a nebbish and Harper and his Conservatives were able to bully him mercilessly in attack ads that started running on television as soon as Dion became the Liberals' leader. Bankrupt financially as well as politically, the Liberals could do little to fight back and seemed to find, eventually, that they did not want to, Dion having become an

embarrassment for them. Though intelligent and sincere, he lacked the charisma and energy that Liberals are used to seeing in their leaders.

Only one thing stood in the way of another election, which the Liberals were ill-prepared to face: those seemingly innocuous promises made during the 2006 election campaign, in particular a promise to establish fixed four-year intervals between future elections, with the next vote set for October 2009.

What was Harper to do, then, when during the summer of 2008, he concluded that he would win a comfortable majority, if he called an election for the fall of 2008, a year before the fixed-term date he had set? Follow the opportunist's creed, of course: when opportunity knocks, throw your principles and promises under the bus and open the door. Harper overruled his promised legislation and called an election. Parliament, he said, had become dysfunctional; the opposition would not co-operate.

Harper's Conservative won the October 2008 election, but without the majority he thought was his for the taking.

Having been foiled in his attempt to gain absolute power, Harper decided inexplicably to act as though he had it, anyway (shades of a similar decision by an ill-fated Progressive-Conservative predecessor, Joe Clark, in 1980). The Liberals were in disarray, having stumbled seriously in the 2008 election. There was no way (Harper must have assumed) that they, the New Democrats, and the Bloc Québécois could or would set aside their differences (and their fear of hastening another election) to stand in the way of a budget statement that would take away their public funding.

At a time when governments in every other industrialized nation were taking action to rescue their economies, the budget statement strangely offered no significant money or strategies to deal with the economic meltdown that had originated in the United States. That gave the opposition parties an opening and the motivation they needed to fight back. They could not credibly threaten to bring down the Harper government over lost funding, but they could threaten to topple it over inaction on the economy.

I think the opposition parties acted not out of a lust for power, as Harper and his followers (good spin-doctors that they are) suggested but out of desperation. The opposition parties had to vote no confidence in the government to retain their funding, but they (especially the Liberals) could not afford to go into another election, with or without funding. They had to defeat the government without forcing an election. The only way to do that was to form a coalition as an alternative

government to the Conservatives. There was nothing surprising in what the opposition parties did; they had no other choice.

"Nothing concentrates one's mind so much as the realization that one is going to be hanged in the morning!" said Samuel Johnson, the noted eighteenth-century English writer and wit. If Harper had remembered Johnson's wise counsel, he might have suppressed his urge to stage a coup against Canadian democracy by kicking the opposition parties when they were down, though not out. Minority position damned; he saw an opportunity to destroy the Liberals, and he took it.

Irony upon irony: Harper had run the 2008 election campaign offering Canadians his superior leadership skills and experience, yet after winning a minority government in circumstance that called for co-operation and collaboration, he showed that his idea of leadership amounted to driving the bus himself and throwing everyone who challenged him under it. Call it leadership by intimidation. Nothing new in that: Jean Chrétien was good at it, but he had majorities.

Having thrown the promise of kinder, gentler leadership under the bus, and having had his own mind concentrated by the threat of his government's imminent defeat, Harper showed his true leadership colours: slash and burn, scorch the earth, poison the wells, throw everything (including the almost two-thirds of Canadian voters who did not choose his party) under the bus. Throw parliament under the bus, too: play the populist demagogue over MPs' heads. Plead your case on television. Throw Quebec under the bus, as well: ignore the dozen or more times you relied on Bloc Québécois support to keep your previous minority government alive; accuse the coalition of being a separatist plot because it had Bloc support.

The last prime minister who tried to stir up anti-French, Anti-Quebec feeling as a leadership strategy was John Diefenbaker. He won a majority, for a while, but the country and his party rejected him in the end, though not before Canada was deeply wounded and divided.

We live in a representative democracy in which citizens elect people to represent their interests in a parliament where those interests are respected—except when they are at odds, not with democracy, but with the leaderly aspirations of a man whose ego is bigger than the country he presumes to lead.

The country would not, I think, have been well served by a coalition led by a discredited Stéphane Dion. It will, I believe, be even less well served by a Conservative government led by a Stephen Harper who has, during recent weeks, revealed serious, potentially tragic flaws. It's not the Conservative party that has been undermined by Harper, it is his own credibility. If the previous parliament was dysfunctional, how can the current one (or the next one, if Harper remains) be any less fractious and confrontational? Trust, co-operation, collaboration, goodwill, probably even national unity, are impossible with Harper as prime minister.

The only way out, the only honourable option, is for Harper to resign. That won't happen. Conservative leaders (both small-c and large-c) in the English-speaking world like to think of themselves as Winston Churchills—unflinching defenders of their nations' real and national borders and bridges against barbarian hordes. How sad. Churchill had a cause and a nation to defend; Harper has only an ideology and an agenda. Leadership, in Stephen Harper's world, means never having to say you're sorry—even when you have lost control of the national bus and find yourself headed toward a cliff.



Hugh MacDonald, MLA

Edmonton-Gold Bar

Constituency Office
Edmonton Gold Bar
#102, 7024 – 101 Avenue, NW
Edmonton, Alberta T6A 0H7
Tel: 414-1015
Fax: 414-1017



e-mail: hugh.macdonald@assembly.ab.ca
website: www.liberalopposition.com

It ain't easy:

Reflections on a community servant and a community voice

By Jim Gurnett

In April 1994, months after a vicious new premier of Alberta by the name of Ralph Klein graduated from giving the finger to those he didn't like as environment minister to giving a full-out shaft to poor people by starting his ugly little reign as King Ralph with massive cuts to social commitments in the provincial budget in the name of balancing the budget, a new little tabloid appeared on the streets of downtown Edmonton. Called "Spare Change", the paper had two purposes—to provide a product those with little money could sell to make something to help them survive in a heartless province that didn't mind cutting welfare rates to the bone but wouldn't consider raising oil royalty rates to the rich energy companies, and providing access to the voices of people who were struggling to survive in the urban core during those ugly times, and to share the real experiences of people and let them have a way to share their hopes and worries and creativity with others. One of the writers published in that first Edmonton street paper, and one of the original vendors too, was a woman by the name of Linda Dumont.

Over the next few years her writing, art, and journalism was a regular part of nearly every issue of Spare Change and continued as it evolved into Our Voice. She continued to be on the streets selling the paper. She took a lead role in spin off initiatives that promoted the poetry of people in the urban core in published anthologies of "Songs of the Street". She was tireless in challenging the powers that made life tough for poor people and in advocating for a non-judgemental chance for some of the most marginalized people in the city. She didn't force her own opinions on us much, mostly she just made sure the voices of people who would otherwise never be heard were brought forward, sometimes pretty roughly expressed but voices of truth and insight. She irritated nearly everyone at one time or another, me included, as she stubbornly lived and worked faithful to her understanding of justice.

In late 2003 she took another brave step she believed needed to be taken when she scraped together the money to print the first issue of Edmonton Street News. I'm both surprised and pleased I can be congratulating her on the fifth anniversary of the paper. Being able to have a challenging publication that offers perspectives not available elsewhere is important for the city and without Linda's determination and energy we would not have it.

One of my favourite stories is one Jesus

told about a poor widow who wouldn't stop bugging a judge to do something about an unfairness she believed has taken place in her life. She harassed the guy day and night and no matter how often he told her to forget it, she persistently raised her case again. Finally he ruled in her favour. The word for that behaviour is "importunity" and Linda is one of my heroes as a model of this approach. When she believes something is necessary she keeps going to make it be, whether or not it seems to be possible. ESN has never managed to attract many paid advertisers (but those few who have come on board deserve a big thanks!) and I know she has never been hard-nosed about making sure vendors properly pay for every paper they get. I know she has worked extra shifts at group homes to scrape together the money to get the paper published some months, has scrambled to find someone to buy one of her paintings or let her wretched old car go a bit longer without a needed repair, to make sure an issue was available to vendors on time.

Thank you Linda Dumont. Most of us are only as brave as we can cover our asses to be, we calculate how much we can risk and operate in that safe space. You trust God and go for it, do what you believe is necessary and just. There aren't many of us who will ever dare to follow your example, but perhaps some of us have been moved a bit further along the path of living with integrity because of you.

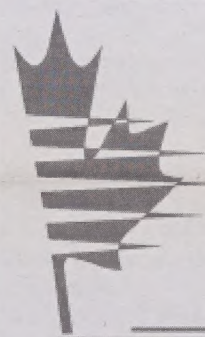
But praising Linda for her central and significant role in ensuring street journalism has survived in Edmonton for 14 years when it has not made it in very many other cities of North America is not enough. There are closely related matters that must be raised too: Why are there still so many people in a rich city like Edmonton that need to make a living standing in the cold and rain and heat on street corners hoping people hurrying past will spring a few dollars to buy a paper from them? Why are we still so disinterested in the voices of those who are not success stories by our capitalist standards, but we maintain an endless appetite for the words of the rich and beautiful folks in glossy magazines?

In just the week before the fifth anniversary issue of ESN went to press late in 2008 there were five reports released documenting the continued calculated abuse of the poor and the weak. This included the count of homeless people in Edmonton telling us the average daily numbers have increased nearly 20 percent since 2006, to almost 3100 people, and have *tripled* since the counts started in 1999. A report from Capital Health telling us the life expectancy of people in the poorest neighbourhoods of the city is years shorter than it is for those in the wealthy parts of town. The annual report of Campaign 2000 telling us

one in six children lives in poverty in Edmonton. What's wrong with us that no matter how overwhelming the evidence of the damage being done we are still content to leave some people in the gutter while others of us drive by in our comfortable limos?

A major campaign is about to be launched around the world to invite us to pay attention to the one idea that is part of every major religion on the planet: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. That can be pretty airy-fairy stuff. But perhaps we can link the celebration of ESN's fifth anniversary with this and realize it comes down in the end to recognizing that "others" includes the least attractive, includes those we find it easiest to judge and find wanting, and that if we deny them a decent quality of life by our indifference to them or our selfishness or our belief a person has to prove she/he "deserves" kindness before it is offered, then we are part of the problem. Most of all, ESN reminds us that the real measure is not our lip service to these noble ideas, but our willingness to put them into practice.

I hope as ESN moves into its sixth year that we will not just buy the paper out of some shallow sense of charity, but we'll read it and work through the discomfort the contents cause us, we'll take time to get to know the people who sell the paper, we'll make sure we support its survival.



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

THE COMPANY THEY KEEP

When opposition parties join forces and vote against a government they are exercising their democratic rights under our Parliamentary traditions. That is understood by all.

However, the recent plan by the Liberals and NDP to form a government, dependent on the support of separatists, is something that cannot be understood as anything other than a blatant desire for power with a disregard for the good of the country. How can such a coalition be considered good for Canada if it depends on the support of those whose political goal is to break up the country?

That supposedly federalist politicians would consider such an option just weeks after an election and days after supporting the government on the Throne Speech is troubling, to say the least. They should be ashamed of themselves, especially since they stated clearly during the election campaign that a coalition between parties was not an option.

I first entered public life after the 1995 Quebec Referendum to champion the cause of Canadian unity, working on unity projects in both Alberta and Quebec. When I first ran for Parliament, in 1997, it was on a Canadian unity platform – and I have continued to work for unity in the years since.

When parents are raising their children they frequently remind them of the importance of making wise choices in their friendships, telling them they will be known by the company they keep. This is something that Liberals and New Democrats might want to consider as they ponder their political future. History will judge them by their associates, and do they really want it said they were in bed with the separatists?

I think the government of Canada should never be turned over to those who want to break the country apart.

What do you think?

780-495-3261 www.petergoldring.ca



Hugh Macdonald MLA and Ivan Miller at the Fifth Anniversary Party - Photo by Joshua Branson

Winter Emergency Plan

Overview

The Winter Emergency Committee was initiated several years ago by Homeward Trust Edmonton (formerly Edmonton Housing Trust Fund - EHTF and the Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing - EJPCOH) to lead a community planning process to develop a functional and feasible Winter Emergency Response Plan. It has involved representatives of Homeward Trust, the three orders of government and community service agencies.

Repeatedly over the winter years, it is clear that the need for a coordinated response to the needs of the homeless population during the difficult winter months continues to be important and is depended upon by both the homeless and the agencies delivering the services.

Using the experience gained over the past years, the knowledge can be used to anticipate the winter needs in Edmonton. The information in this report is based on previous years' events and the anticipated amounts are approximate. With the Edmonton population increasing and the migrants' shifting demographics, the needs might change during the course of the winter season, and therefore, some of the planned responses might be adjusted to react to those changes.

There are a few factors which contribute to the challenge of arriving at a comfortable prediction of how many additional shelter mats and other services that might be required over the winter months. The number of people camping in the river valley and city parklands has increased, whereas the shelter usage has gone down over the last several months. During the last year's WER program, the overflow mat facility has been consistently underutilized. A reduced contingency is planned for the 2008/09 winter emergency response.

It is important to understand that the costs associated with providing shelter/overnight mats differ from those associated with providing drop in/warming centre, transportation and other support services to the homeless. The overnight mat service is calculated based on individual clients served, whereas, the warming centers and other services are able serve numerous and repeated clients throughout their operating hours. The costs have risen over the years as facility and staffing overhead has escalated.

In comparison to the 2007/08 WER Plan, this Plan anticipates costs that came to light well into the 2007/08 program, where a number of participating agencies requested additional funding/upward amendments to compensate for higher costs i.e. security, additional staff, etc.

The intent of the Winter Emergency Response Plan is to identify services and housing requirements that would mitigate the obstacles and dangers encountered by people who are homeless during the winter months.

The key components recommended for the 2008-09 Plan are as follows:

Winter Shelter: The main provider of emergency shelter mats continues to be Hope Mission. Based on previous year's statistics, an additional 50 mats should be sufficient to meet the demand. The Salvation Army expressed their interest and capacity to accommodate the additional mats only. Hope Mission would staff the 50 mats, including security guards.

Estimated Cost: \$ 300,000

Services and Special Needs: This plan recognizes that there are special requirements for different populations, from chronically homeless to families to those with health and disabilities issues. As well, the needs of secondary migrants for assistance remains high. In addition to appropriate shelter responses for these groups, additional support and additional .5 FTE health care are required.

Estimated Cost: \$200,000

Transportation: It is proposed that the Winter Emergency Van and follow-up service be operated once again (previously operated by Boyle Street Community Services).

Estimated Cost: \$250,000

Drop-Ins & Warming: Emphasis is on the use of existing facilities throughout the day and with extended hours for drop in facilities so services are available 7 days per week and when the shelters are closed.

Estimated Cost: \$700,000

Coordination: In order to make the most effective use of existing and new resources, focused coordination of Winter Emergency Response initiatives is required. This will also involve monitoring of shelter use and initiation of appropriate responses depending on need.

Estimated Cost: \$ 25,000

Subtotal	Projected Winter Plan Cost:	\$1,475,000
-----------------	------------------------------------	--------------------

Extreme Situation: In light of the current context, there needs to be a contingency for additional shelter spaces should client numbers and weather indicate a need; or, in case of an emergency/extreme situation i.e. fire, flood or other disasters should prohibit any of the existing overnight shelter agencies from providing accommodation for the homeless. It is anticipated that the Marv Holland building would be utilized for this purpose only on an as needed basis.

Estimated Cost: \$ 250,000

Subtotal	Projected Cost in Extreme Situation:	\$ 250,000
-----------------	---	-------------------

Total Estimated Cost:	\$1,725,000
------------------------------	--------------------



Why the Slums

By Ernest Ballandine

Why the slums?
Do you like people
Who live in ghettos?
Do you enjoy society's crumbs?
Does your face turn people
as much as their favour
"Dad, will you get out of this
place?
Go back to a sound proof place
Where there will be quiet and
peace.
You will eat better than any sou-
pline dish.
You can spit on the parlour floor
Watch hockey on TV in comfort
and ease."
"Sorry, understand I chose to do
this
Why, when Jesus himself worked
with grace,
Respect these slum.ghettopeople
as well as the rest,
Please."

Can't find an Edmonton Street News vendor on the street?

Don't miss an issue. Take out a subscription. for \$30 for one year (12 issues). Mail your check to:
Edmonton Street News Society
9533-106A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0S9

Donations Needed

Warm clothing, mitts, socks
boots, blankets, sleeping
bags, tarps, and duffel bags
wanted to be given to home-
less people in need.

Donations can be dropped off
at the House of Refuge
Mission at the corner of 103
A Avenue and 95 Street,
from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. any
evening,
or at the Edmonton Street
News office at 9533-106A
Avenue (back door) call 428-
0805 to arrange for a time,
or see Linda at the
Strathcona Farmer's Market
Saturday mornings near the
back entrance between 8
a.m. and 10 a.m.